

CIRCUMVENTING THE MAHSEER AND OTHER SPORTING
FISH IN INDIA AND BURMA.

BY

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(With 5 plates and 1 text-figure).

(Continued from page 59 of this volume)

PART V.

THE MAHSEER IN BURMA.

*Oh! Scaly monsters of the deep, or of the turbid stream,
Reveal your secrets now and then, and fulfil the Angler's dream!
Why do you accept my bait one day, disdain it on another?
Though light and shade prevail the same, please what's the secret
khubbar?*

*I cast my spoon and hide from sight, the same from day to day.
Sometimes you take it at my feet, anon just swim away!
Large sums I spend on rod and reel, all to beguile and fight,
Hundreds of miles I go in search, to test your strength and might.
Into the bowels of the Himalayas, to Burma, Assam, Mysore,
And barren mountains and waters small, Quetta, Banu, Tor.
Then to Trap Rock and Tiger Land, where only gram you take,
Raipur, Saugor, Seoni, in Tapti Sone or Berach.
Pride of place in my heart I give, to your Ava cousins all,
Be they monsters of the Mali H'ka, or Barilius Bola small.
Long may your secrets remain your own, and long may your haunts
prevail,
For this after all is the fun of the chase, to find you, lure you, then
fail!*

A.M.

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THE MAHSEER IN BURMA.

In devoting a special chapter to Burma I do so with recollections of perhaps some of the finest fishing waters in the Indian

Empire, for they hold a variety of mahseer the study of which affords a most interesting subject. As a province it is, with Assam, the best and most adapted to the mahseer. This is on account of its net-work of rivers, forest clad, and for the most part unmolested by the ravages of man or beast. Sir George Scott writing in his book *Burma and Beyond* says:—

‘From the stretch of hill country between Assam and China a number of mighty rivers start to run southwards in nearly parallel courses. They supply all the water that is wanted for cultivation and irrigation in Indo-China. They begin near one another in a very narrow span of longitude, and gradually spread out in a fan, which covers the lands from the Yellow Sea to the Bay of Bengal. All of them run in deep narrow rifts, and the ranges which separate them go on running southwards almost as far as the rivers themselves, and in China almost as sharply defined as the river Channels.’

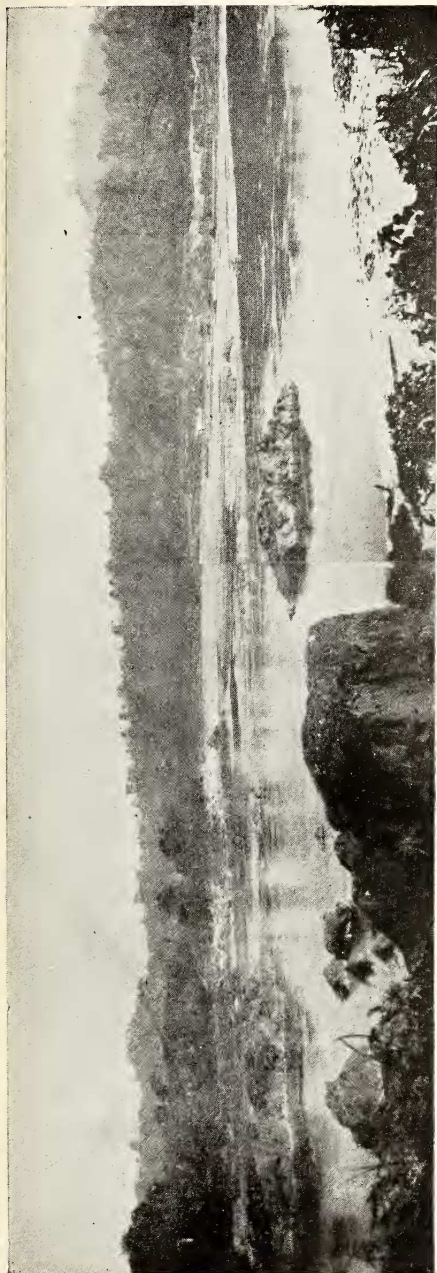
‘These mountain ranges fall away from each other as the river valleys widen, and they lose their height as tributary streams steadily cut through the ridges which form herring-bone spurs and spines. But they still keep the same north and south direction, though here and there spines re-enter and form the series of flat-bottomed valleys and wide straths which make up the Shan States.’

‘Of all these rivers the Salween most steadily preserves its original character, for it flows swiftly down in deep channels, sometimes precipitous gorges between high cliffs, from its source till it reaches the plain-land, which it has itself piled up over the sea in the course of ages. It runs down the centre of the British Shan States, and these lie towards the fringe, and nearly in the centre of the fan, which has for its ribs the Brahmaputra, the Irrawaddy, the Salween itself, the Mekhong and the Yangtzu.’ The chief rivers in the north are the Chindwin on the west, the Irrawaddy in the centre and the Salween to the East, with the Tenasserim in the South.

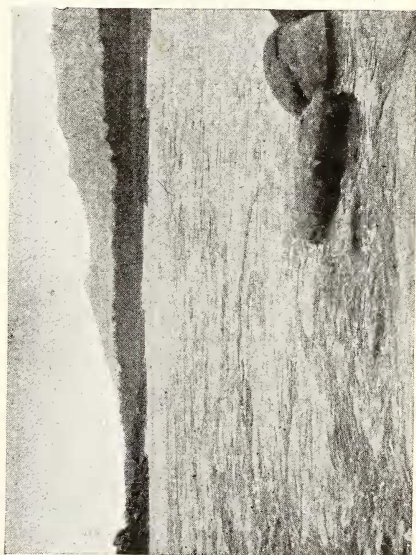
1. *The Chindwin*.—Fed from the west by the Manipur river and its smaller tributaries and from the east by the Uyu and its many affluents, all of which hold mahseer; for some unaccountable reason the fish of this river are reluctant to take spoon or spinning bait. This has been the experience in the past, and it must for this reason alone be classed as an indifferent fishing river below Homalian. In the Hukawng valley, where the Chindwin rises, the fish run large and are game, taking spoon readily; the upper reaches of the Uyu, coming from Mogaung and Karmaing in the Myitkyina district, also afford excellent sport.

The circumventing of the fish in the Chindwin is an unfinished study in the case of the western rivers, though not to such an extent with the eastern tributaries.

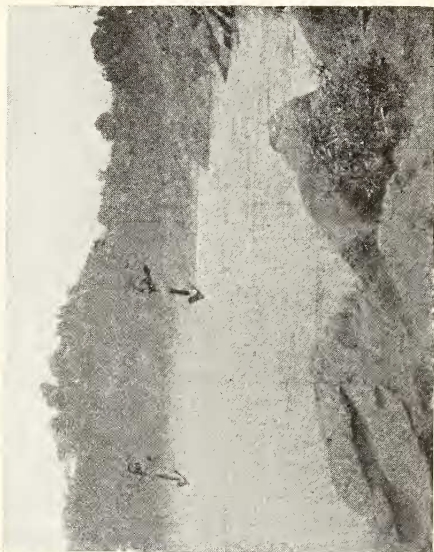
2. *The Irrawaddy*.—Roughly dividing Burma lengthways has some 700 miles of course before it empties itself into the sea below Rangoon. It becomes the Irrawaddy 29 miles above Myitkyina, the most Northern district of Burma, where two rivers of equal size, the Mali and N'Mai H'ka come into confluence, forming a picturesque junction and an angler's paradise. The fishing water may be roughly defined as being above Katha. It is not really good till Bhamo, but is par-excellence above Myitkyina whence, from the confluence of the Mali and N'Mai H'ka to Fort Hertz up the Mali, and H'Tawgaw up the N'Mai, there is approximately 120 miles of water on each of these rivers. Fish run to any size, and many a monster is to be seen cruising in the backwaters of the Mali from the road above at Teing H'ka. At the actual confluence I have taken a 75 pounder and fought for two hours with another monster and then lost him. In the Myitkyina District there are numerous



1. A panoramic view of the famous confluence looking down from the bungalow.



2. Famous rocks 22 miles north of Myitkyina.



3. Mali Rapid into confluence F—G is excellent water.

large spring-fed rivers that make excellent junctions with these two rivers, the Mali and N'Mai, and some wonderful bags have been made in the past.

3. *The Salween.*—This great river, which is navigable for hundreds of miles inland, is hardly touched on in any books as a fishing river. I here again quote Sir J. G. Scott from his book :

'The Salween is one of the most astonishing rivers in the world. Its sources are not accurately known, and throughout its whole course, in British territory at least, it preserves the character of a gigantic railway cutting or canyon. Though it runs from North to South, it has a variety of bends that prevent any very long view up or down its course. The banks rise to thousands of feet on each side, and often so sheer from the water's edge that there is seldom room for any sort of camping ground on either side. In the dry weather there are what may be called 'bays' of blinding white sand, or a chaos of huge boulders strewn broadcast; and here and there, where a tributary enters, a stretch of pebbly gravel. The rocks are of the hardest kind, siliceous and even vitreous, and yet they are ground and scored by the stones borne down by the current. The rocks for the most part are coated with a glistening polish, as if they were black-leaded, and when it is considered that the sun can only shine down into this great gorge when right overhead, and that blankets of mist lie over it every morning, its austerity may be imagined'.

'A feature of the Salween is the extreme coldness of its waters, partly caused by the melted snows coming down from the sources, but partly also because of the lack of sunlight. In the cold weather the mist hangs over it densely like a blanket, but in the hot weather it rises half-way up the hills, and remaining there produces the phenomenon of sunshine above and a clear atmosphere over the river bed. This blanket of fog is found by aneroid to measure a thousand feet with a clear atmosphere above and below'. The average difference between high and low water in the Salween level is sixty or seventy feet, and in some places as much as ninety feet. There are many rapids in the current, and many reefs of rock running across. In the time of high water all beaches and boulders are lost, and the water actually laps the steep slopes of the forest. The current varies extremely; there are sluggish reaches, and then races. Native boats at certain seasons of the year can ply on it, but continuous navigation for any length would be impossible.'

'There are many ferries for traders at various points, but in some the ferry-men live in villages high up on the hills above, and the steepness and the absence of proper landing-places make the working of these ferries both difficult and erratic.'

'The drenching mists would lead to fevers and ague, it might be supposed, but the Red Kerens, and others who live in the District, seem to be immune, from long acclimatisation.'

'At five miles below the Keren-ni border the busy part of the river begins, with the Ta Taw Maw ferry, and from here the river is a regular trade route down to Moulmein and the coast.'

There is little to be desired more than this as a fitting description of ideal mahseer water. Whether it is because the higher reaches of this river traverse wild country out of the beaten track of the 'White man', or because of lack of enterprize by residents of the neighbouring stations, I have found it difficult to get in touch with any one who has fished it, or knows anything about the fishing this river offers; but that there are huge mahseer in it, is certain. A correspondent writes me that a nephew in the Bombay Burma Teak Corporation told him of having seen shoals of masheer 6 ft. in length cruising at certain places in the lower Salween, on the Siam Border.

The rivers coming in on the left bank from China should certainly hold mahseer, even though the rivers coming in on the right bank from the Shan States are almost denuded of fish life by the

extensive irrigation. This appears to have been the experience of most anglers posted in the Shan States: and we read in 'The Mighty Mahseer' that it is hardly worth wetting line in any of these rivers. An illustration of what poaching and extensive irrigation will do.

4. *Tenasserim*.—In the south this river has afforded excellent sport and the rubber planters have made some big bags. Trips are made by motor launch into the higher reaches where large fish of 50 or 60 pounds have been taken so that, generally speaking, we might justly conclude that the Mahseer is common throughout Burma; and one can reasonably expect to find him in any perennial stream which is rocky and rises in hills, irrespective of where it joins the larger rivers. As an illustration of this see Sahnaw Chaung further on in this chapter.

5. *Size of Mahseer*.—To what size we may expect fish in a river depends largely on the size of its waters. The larger the river the bigger do fish run.

The limit of the size a Mahseer attains is put at nine feet.

6. *Burma record and Record Masheer*.—The best taken to date in Burma is 92 lbs., caught two miles below Myitkyina and a souvenir of the fish was in the Myitkyina Club. The record Masheer caught on rod and line is 119 lbs. This was taken in Mysore; it was 64 inches long and had a girth of 42 inches.

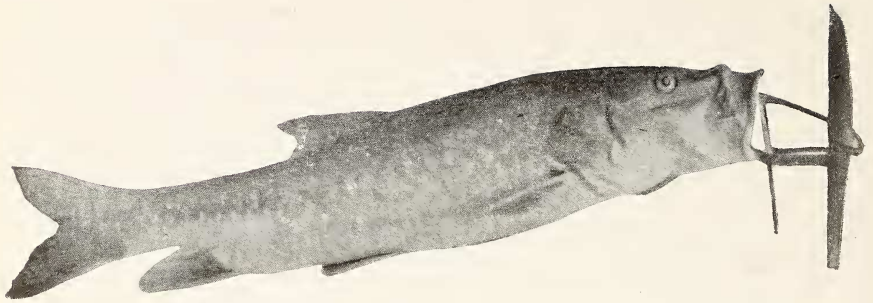
That this grand fish can be beaten in Burma I am convinced. I have myself seen fish nearly 6 feet long at Tiang-Kha, 40 miles north from Myitkyina, that must have been 150 lbs. At the confluence of the Mali and N'Mai Rivers also, I have seen fish rise that were 18 inches across the back, if an inch. This much suffices then, to show that we have in Burma Mahseer as large as anywhere else in the Indian Empire.

7. *Varieties of Mahseer*.—Burma in particular is fortunate in offering opportunities for studying the much neglected subject of the varieties of mahseer. Thomas in his 'Rod in India' of 1873 invited the attention of anglers to this study. To give up catching fish when they are on the feed, and write down copious notes and details of an unusual fish is not a very interesting occupation, still it is time well spent, and invaluable to Natural History. By doing this in 1928, I was able to open up the question of whether there are not at least 6 distinct varieties of mahseer to be caught. The photographs contained in this chapter show the difference but they are not conclusive enough. If anglers would only further note down the colourings and different characteristics of such fish, we may prove this by specimens packed and forwarded to the Bombay Natural History Society. (See specimen form elsewhere.)

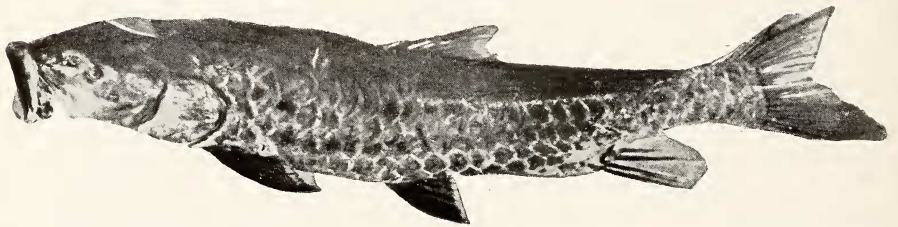
The six types of Mahseer that I caught are as follows; and though they differ all fit Doctor Day's *Barbus tor* in the main points.

8. *The Golden or Himalayan Mahseer* is the commonest and the same as the Indian fish, which are represented by two forms:—

(a) Golden Mahseer. The Putitor Mahseer, *Barbus tor putitora* (Hamilton) known in Assam as the 'Greyhound' fish. It is usually long and narrow, with a distinct black line down his entire length, two and a half scales in width above the lateral line, head large and long, top half green, lower half pale green running into silver.



1. Golden or Himalayan Mahseer, *Barbus tor putitora* Hamilton, 23 lbs. Because of its long body referred to in Assam as the Greyhound type.



2. Black Mahseer. A colour variety of the Putitor or Golden Mahseer.



3. Chocolate Mahseer, *Barbus (Lissochilus) hexagonolepis*.



4. Red Mahseer. Another colour variety of *Barbus (L.) hexagonolepis*.

Above lateral line from golden with a mauve tinge on silver grey background. Fins blend with colouring; dorsal green and dirty pink, ventral and pectoral pale green to olive with red fringe. Eye: iris golden, pupil black. Belly white.

(b) The Tor mahseer, *Barbus (Tor) tor* (Hamilton). This is rather uncommon, and is generally taken with paste or dead bait, fishing on the bottom. The head and mouth is smaller, and body deeper than in the first type, the colouring is much the same as the first type. See photos opposite. The scientific names have been adopted from Dr. Hora's article *Game Fishes of India*, from the *Bombay Natural History Society's Journal*, Vol. xli, No. 3, page 521 dated April 1940.

9. *Thick-lipped Mahseer*.—The thick-lipped mahseer has the same colouring as the Himalayan mahseer differing only in the head. Chief features are the thick lips with the adipose extension. Hora classifies this fish as a variation of the true *putitor* mahseer, the development of the lips not being as yet cleared up.

10. *The Black Mahseer*.—Two distinct types are taken. (a) Is stocky in build, head small and black, mouth small, barbels and eyes black. This fish is marked by a jet black line two half scales above the lateral line; scales above lateral line have a tinge of gold on the scale tips running to jet black on the back. Below lateral line scales are lighter but dirty white, almost shot black to the scales on the belly which are dirty white with a black fringe. Fins black with grey at base. It is fairly common in the streams which are heavily wooded, and is almost without exception a very game fish.

(b) Is a melanic form of the *putitor* mahseer.

11. *Copper Mahseer*.—The copper mahseer is quite the most beautiful fish I have seen. He is bright copper all over with a sheen running into all the colours of the rainbow, he runs from the deepest shade of copper with the delicate mauve sheen throughout, to the more delicate shades of copper with shell pink, on a background of shot silver and gold. The head is small and nose slightly concave, the lips are a modification of the thick-lipped variety. The adipose continuation of the lower jaw is clearly defined, but very much modified and not so pronounced as in the thick-lipped variety. Fins deep blue, except tail fin which has a red fringe. Belly delicate shade of yellow eyes bright copper; pupil deep indigo blue. Only three of this variety were caught in 1928 at the confluence of the Mali and N'Mai Rivers; best fish weighing 25 lbs. no black line down the side.

12. *The Chocolate Mahseer*.—Head round and square and small like a *Labeo*, colour bronze, running through delicate shades into purple. No black line above lateral line. Above the lateral line chocolate running into blue to dark chocolate on the back, with polished bronze tinge to scale tips. Below lateral line, running from faint silvery blue to white on belly to the extent of three complete rows of scales, with half row on either side, clearly defined, making four. Bright orange spots under lower jaw on chin; lips thin, mouth small. Fins sky blue; iris chocolate; pupil black. Two fish of this kind taken, best 28 lbs. taken also at the confluence of the Mali and N'Mai Rivers.

13. *The Red Mahseer* has a round and small head, top of which is shot gold and purple, also gill plates; mouth small. Above Lateral Line, beautiful sea green shot with silver, tips of scales salmon pink. Below Lateral Line, mauve with silver, vermilion tips to scales; belly pink, fins all bright red; black line above the Lateral Line not present in this fish. Eye golden, pupil indigo blue. Took five of these fish at the same confluence, best 18 lbs.

A study of the photographs will convince anyone interested, that these fish bear marked differences to each other both in colouring and shape. This is of no value to piscatology, but if fishermen are able to differentiate the varieties, my object will be fulfilled; and if further pursued, by specimens being sent to Bombay, we will have at least opened up this neglected but interesting study.

From the recent work by Dr. Sunder Lal Hora, on the Game Fishes of India, appearing in serial form in the *Bombay Natural History Society Journal*, and from correspondence I have had with him, he has identified these fish as follows:—

The Chocolate Mahseer ...	} <i>B. (Lissochilus) hexagonolepis</i> (McClellan)	
Stocky Black (a) ,, ...		only colour forms.
Red ,, ...		
The Golden Mahseer ...	} <i>B. tor putilora</i> (Hamilton).	
The Thick-lipped Mahseer.		
The Black (melanic) (b) Mahseer ...	} The hypertrophied lips being only a peculiarity, not yet fully investigated.	
The Copper Mahseer ...		
	} <i>B. tor mosal</i> (Hamilton).	

14. *Points to remember when fishing.*—Mahseer which have not been 'educated' by wielders of the spinning rod are not, so far as my experience goes, shy or difficult to catch; so we need only follow the usual rules of fishing; to be successful. There are, however, one or two points of importance which, if mentioned elsewhere, will also bear repetition here, as being of special value while fishing in Burma, where the dense forest that grows to the water's edge of most of the rivers supplies various leaves, fruits and vegetation to form a diet to which these fish seem particularly partial. The large jungle figs, so abundant at certain seasons, are much sought after; also the larger forms of insect life.

In the matter of spoon, fishing deep meets with success; in fact it is only by so doing that one hooks the really big fish. The use of as fine tackle as is compatible with the size of the fish, combined with the least conspicuous mounting and hook arrangements, amply repays the careful fisherman in these gin clear waters.

15. *Best season for catching fish.*—The general idea of the autumn and spring being the best seasons does not appear to fit most of the rivers of Burma. This is also the case in Assam. Langley's famous catch of 1400 lbs. of mahseer in two days was made in November up the Mali H'ka, and good bags have been made by others at the same season. It is interesting to note that these cold weather catches have all been made at the junction of spring-fed rivers, with the N'Mai H'ka and the Mali H'ka, both of which are snow fed, and probably connected with the winter spawn.



Left. Chocolate Mahseer, *Barbus (Lissochilus) hexagonolepis*, 16 lbs.
Right. Golden Mahseer, *Barbus tor putitora*, 23 lbs.



Left. Thick-lipped Mahseer, *Barbus tor puitora* Hamilton.

Right. Copper Mahseer, *Barbus tor mosal* Hamilton.

Note the pronounced adipose extension of the lips in the larger fish. It is a peculiarity not yet fully investigated.

16. *Fish destroyers, Crocodiles and Turtles.*—The upper reaches of the Irrawaddy from Bhamo are free from crocodile and turtles, and the fish are assured this much immunity in having nothing larger than the otter to destroy them. This is a curious situation, and rather unaccountable as the Mogaung and Namyin, and the Uyu are all large, sluggish rivers, with rocks and sandy beds, especially adapted to these fish-eaters; game also abounds for the mugger in the dense forest that grows down to the banks. Long may this remain foreign to these pests.

The upper waters of the Chindwin also, I understand, are free from the crocodile, and the turtle is rare, though one was caught on a Victor rod by Mr. T. P. Dewar in the Hukawng valley, 87 lbs., while fishing with a spoon!!

Otter. Otters abound and there is hardly a stream free from them. I have seen schools of as many as eleven, hunting together in small streams. They occasionally damage large fish, and are besides Man, practically the only destructive creature in these waters.

Man. Even in Man we may count our luck as being well in, for the best fishing water in Burma is undoubtedly in the Hill tracts. These are administered by the Burma Frontier Service, whose officers are both policeman and magistrate. No settlement is allowed in these tracts by our Aryan brethren, so the country remains unspoiled and wild. Long may the policy last.

I refer to Kachins chiefly, who fortunately for the fish are a lazy easy-going people, and slow at exterminating fish. They have their primitive methods of trapping, shooting with arrows, cutting with *dhas* by night with the aid of flares, even poisoning the fish, but with all this, are not nearly as destructive as the fishing classes in India, who deplete a river in a short time. In some streams fish are partly protected, by the local *Dewar*, or chief of a group of villagers, who allows trapping to be done only after permission is obtained, or when he has a feast. So long as these Hill tracts are not thrown open to colonization, we may hopefully expect to see mahseer remain in the same great numbers as at present.

FISHING SMALL STREAMS IN BURMA.

There is abundant opportunity for the Angler who wishes to try Fly, or Fly Spoon, in the innumerable small streams that drain this forest clad land.

In fact, almost any stream, however small, will hold Mahseer and Trout (*B. bola*), provided it rises in the hills, and is perennial. It seems immaterial where these streams meet the larger parent rivers, or whether the bed is shingle or sand, fast or sluggish.

Let me here describe just one such stream. I will take as an example the Sahmaw Chaung, in the Myitkyina District.

I was resident on Finlay Fleming's Sugar Estate for 4 years. It was then in its embryo stage; I was employed in the process of opening up vast areas of grass land for sugarcane cultivation, so I was able to study the river fairly thoroughly. I had some

200 mahseer, ranging from 4 lbs. to a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., protected behind my bungalow, under a large concrete bridge. These were fed daily, and fishing was forbidden for a distance of 300 yards above and below.

This little burn is no more than 15 miles over its total length, and about 10 yards across at its widest part, and is nowhere over its whole length more than 8 feet deep. The drop is considerable, and it is consequently a series of shallow runs and pools, varying in depth from 3 to 6 feet.

The bed is shingle with small boulders 18" in diameter and the water gin clear. The banks, for the last four miles of its course, and where it flows out into the valley are covered with high grass (*Saccharum glumeosum*) known locally as *Kaing* grass, but better still as tiger or elephant grass, growing about 12 ft. high.



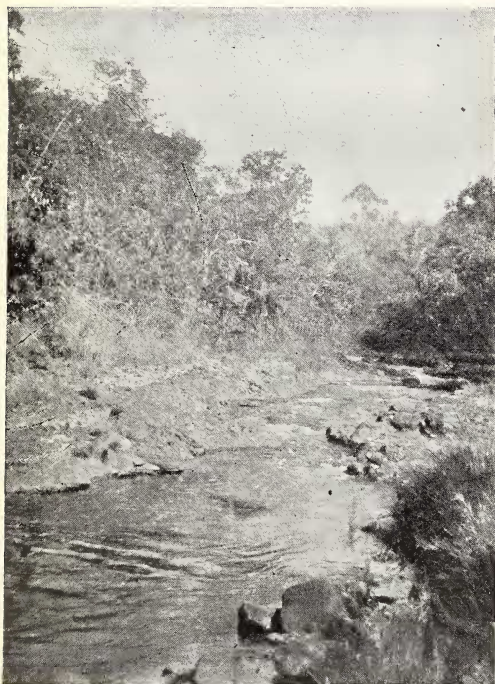
Two good Silund (*Silundia gangetica*) taken at the mouth of the Namti H'ka :
22 and 15 lbs.

I have taken Mahseer up to 7 lbs., out of this little stream, and *B. bola* of 3 lbs. It is full of fish, and a dozen or so small mahseer may be taken any day, over a couple of miles of water.

THE SAHMAW CHAUNG.



1. View through Finlay Fleming's Estate.



2. Hill section, holding fish from 8-10 lbs.



3. Another view of Hill section Typical *B. bola* water

B. bola of good size and in plenty, may be had over the whole stretch of river.

I give below two specimen days, with these fish:—

<i>Date</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Bait and Tackle</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
12-4-1925	3. 2. 2. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ and 6 others = 17 lbs. Mahseer	$\frac{1}{4}$ " copper and silver Spoon	Salt lick. Fished all day. Put 6 back.
5-7-1925	3. 2. 2. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. 1. 1. 1. and 24 others = 19 lbs. <i>B. bola</i>	„	Below North align- ment from 9 a.m. to 11; put 18 back.

17. *Isolation not a factor.*—The interesting feature about this little stream lies not so much in the fish it holds, as in its isolation and distance to the nearest Mahseer water. The Sahmaw stream flows into the Namyin Chaung. A slow sluggish river with a sandy muddy bed, draining the Mu Valley for 40 miles or so; and emptying itself into the Mogaung River 20 miles from where it takes in the Sahmaw Chaung. Over the whole length of its course it is free from rapids, and has no mahseer. The Mogaung River is a very considerable stream, but is also muddy and sluggish, and has no rapids or runs for 30 or 40 miles from where the Namyin joins; so that this colony of mahseer, in the Sahmaw Chaung, is isolated and is at least 50 miles from the nearest suitable water, with no other smaller tributaries in between.

I deal with this at length, in order to illustrate the possibilities of fishing in the many similar streams found in Burma. There is of course no doubt about any small streams that run into the rivers in the Hill tracts, as these are bound to hold fish.

It is interesting to note that in the hills, where the Sahmaw Chaung runs through a small defile, two or three large pools have formed in which can be seen from above fish of 15 lbs. or more. It would be most interesting to know the age of these fish, as their size is out of all proportion to the size of the stream. They are resident there at all times of the year.

18. *The tackle* is the same as for all light fishing, but the lighter the gut and smaller the spoon, the better. I found 3x gut and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " Fly Spoon answered best. Fly took well, but did not give the good results of the Fly Spoon, with either *B. bola* or Mahseer.

A chapter on Burma cannot be considered complete, without some reference to the famous 'Confluence' and to the water above Myitkyina.

I have included in this chapter notes from my own diary, with a summary of my bag, not with any object of exemplifying my results, but to illustrate to the would-be visitor what he may expect. For although this is wonderful water, it is by no means easy, nor does the reel sing at every cast. These are results of 10 hours of hard fishing daily.

For the condensed notes of the fishing round Myitkyina, I am indebted to Capt. Finch, who put in a great deal of hard work compiling them, when Hon. Secretary of the Club. They give anyone interested, all the details required, and should the reader wish to

satisfy himself further, of these two famous places 'The Confluence' and 'Seniku', I can only suggest his getting Sheets 92 to G/6, and 92 G/14, scale 1 inch to a mile, obtainable from the Government Map Depot, Calcutta, and studying these with the notes.

It is to the co-operation of anglers in making notes in the fishing books at these places, that we owe all this interesting data.

A great pity it is not done more by station clubs, all over India.

TRIP TO CONFLUENCE OF THE MALI AND N'MAI K'HAS, 1928

<i>Date</i>	<i>Summary of Bag Locality</i>	<i>Weight</i>
11th April, 1928	Confluence	
12th " "	Rocks	
13th " "	"	
14th " "	Confluence	6, 7, 3.
15th " "	"	
16th " "	"	25, 30.
17th " "	Waishi	
18th " "	"	
19th " "	N'Sop Zup.	10.
20th " "	"	4½.
21st " "	"	26.
22nd " "	"	
23rd " "	Tiang Zup.	
24th " "	"	12.
25th " "	N'Sop Zup.	
26th " "	"	
27th " "	Confluence	75, 10, 48 ^a , 3.
28th " "	"	28, 6, 3, 3, 2 ^b , 1½ ^c , 1 ^b , 1 ^b , ½ ^b .
29th " "	"	12, 13, 17½, 18.
30th " "	"	44, 25, 5 ^b , 4 ^b , 2 ^c , 3½ ^c .
1st May	"	23, 10.
2nd " "	"	28.
3rd " "	"	50, 18½, 42 ^a , 31, 1 ^c .
4th " "	"	23, 16, 12, 1½.
5th " "	"	
6th " "	"	27, 24, 14.
7th " "	"	21.
8th " "	Rocks	21, 15, 9, 6, 6.

These include Mahseer and other varieties, ⁷Butchwa, ²Goonch and ⁴*B. bola*².

53 fish weighing 861 lbs. giving an average of 16.25 lbs.

The best day 3rd May. 5 fish weighing 145½ lbs.

The 4 best fish 75, 50, 48, 44 lbs.

² Goonch = *a*.

⁷ Butchwa = *b*.

⁴ *B. bola* = *c*.

SEASONS.

Up to date 1932.

19. *Condensed notes from the Myitkyina and Seniku Fishing Note Book.*

(By kind permission of the Hon. Secretary Capt. Finch and members of the Fishing Club.)

Mahseer have been caught in every month of the year, but undoubtedly, both in the Mali and the N'Mai, the most promising seasons are from late in February until the end of April or the middle of May, (depending upon the

incidence of heavy rain) and also parts of September, October and November. The majority of big fish have been accounted for from the upper Mali in the Autumn, and from the N'Mai in March and April during recent years. The earliest in the year that a catch is recorded is 13th January. One enthusiast landed fish in July and August, and accounted for a couple on 30th December, but this may be regarded as somewhat exceptional.

During the Rains, tributary streams give some sport with small fish, both fly-spoons and flies being successful.

In the Autumn, much depends upon the state of the water, a paucity of rain being conducive to sport with really large Mahseer.

20. 'Baits', etc.—The most satisfactory 'weapon' for these waters is the Spoon. Opinions differ, of course, as to the size and type of spoon which is most killing. A copper and silver spoon of almost any shape, mounted with a flying treble hook is recommended. Two experts, whose names figure as the captors of numerous monster Mahseer, employed home-made spoons not exceeding about two inches in length. Many useful fish have been landed on spoons of four inches and over.

(The writer landed a 65 lbs. on a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch spoon, and a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. on a 3-inch spoon from the same rapid, and the only things that he has hooked on 4-inch spoons during hours of spinning are:—(1) a submerged cabbage, and (2) portions of Asia. Chacun a son goût.)

If fish are feeding or inquisitive they will take anything, even discarded cheroot ends. Prior to 1914, success was frequently achieved with dead bait; live bait has also been used, and these should be resorted to when the water is very dirty and spoons have failed to attract.

Flies and fly-spoons have sometimes given amusing sport in tributaries. In certain places, wild figs, pieces of leaf and those cheerful little insects called by the Burman 'payit', fished near the surface, have caught small Mahseer. 'Phantom' minnows have not proved a success in these waters. The record Mahseer for Burma was taken bottom-fishing with Atta from the Irrawaddy not far from Waingmaw a few miles below Myitkva.

The 'chocolate' mahseer is partial to a worm!

21. *Conditions for Fishing*.—Mahseer have been caught on bright days, on dull days, during rain, even during thunder storms, before noon, at noon, after noon, and after sunset. At any phase of the moon.

Mahseer can be caught on ordinary tackle in dead clear water, in pale green water, in beer-brown water, in pea-soup.

When the river is high, when it is low, when it is rising, when it is falling. The ideal? *Quien sabe?*

In the Spring, I think, when the water is clearish, not transparent, but translucent to a depth of about three to five feet; then good catches may be hoped for.

In the Autumn, when the sun has had a whack at the water, and the water is rather dirty and falling fairly fast, fish may be hooked, particularly where a tributary adds clearer water to the main streams.

When the temperature of the water is high, fish will be more numerous in broken water and close to falls.

When the water is very cold and clear, a few mahseer can be hooked usually in broken white water,

Fish may really be 'on the feed' for most of the day, or perhaps for only half an hour. No definite rule can be laid down as to the best times for fishing. As an example of the impossibility of knowing whether morning or evening fishing will prove the more successful, the following catch, (from the N'Mai), is quoted:

<i>September</i>	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Evening</i>
18th. 5 fish	Best 30 lbs.	Not a touch.
19th	Nil.	5 fish, best 20 lbs.
20th 5 fish	Best 49 lbs.	Nil.
21st	Nil.	Nil.

22. *Tackle*.—In the Myitkyina District, the all-round angler should supply himself with an outfit to meet the following varieties of fishing:—

- (a) Spinning deep in fast water for fish up to 100 lbs.
- (b) Trolling from a boat or raft.
- (c) Casting a fly spoon and fly fishing.

(These notes are given as a rough guide, in case they may prove of assistance to anyone who has not as yet fished in the East.)

(a) 'Heavy' Spinning:—

Rod:—Should be of Greenheart, split cane sometimes fails in a tropical climate. Length 11 to 12 feet is enough.

Reel:—Must hold over 200 yards of suitable line.

Line:—'Lignum Vitae', 36 lbs. strain, from Manton's Calcutta is good.

Traces:—Strong killin Wire.

Leads:—'Jardine' spinning lead type, up to 1½ oz.

Spoons:—Get these made from samples by a lohar, or Indian artificier, and mount them yourself with a flying treble-hook. Good types:—(all obtainable from Manton & Co.).

<i>Name</i>	<i>Colours</i>	<i>Sizes obtainable</i>
The 'Putao' Spoon.	Dull copper and silver.	1½, 2, 2½, 3 ins.
Special Hog-backed.	Gilt both sides best.	Sizes Nos. 4 to 10.
The 'Myitkyina' spoon.	Brass and silver.	Scaled, 4 inches.
Hardy's Hog-backed.	Mahseer.	
Spoon. ¹	Bright gilt and silver.	1", 1½, 2, 2½, 3 ins.

Dead bait tackle.—The Archer Spinner, to take a fish 3 to 6 inches long. Lacy's chilwa tackle.

(b) Trolling from a boat for big fellows:—

A Sea Rod about 8 feet in length.

A large reel to carry 300 yards of line, with an extra brake.

(c) Fly Fishing:—

Dark coloured flies seem to be the most killing, also white or yellow flies at times. Mahseer will probably take any fly occasionally, Suggested:—Watson's Fancy, Blackamoor, Black Gnat; also

¹ A good shape; Hardy's wire mount is unreliable, sometimes fraying through from twisting when a fish is 'on'.

Coachman, Smoky Dun and Yellow Spider, sizes 2, 6, 10; and 12 for barils.

Gut casts as for equivalent weights of salmon and trout.

Accessories :—

One or two intelligent piadas or orderlies: a gaff or landing net is seldom needed.

A Spring balance, to weigh by $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. up to 60 lbs.

A pair of wire-cutting pliers; a small file.

A baiting needle. A tackle box.

Plenty of spares to replace those lost.

23. *Quotations from Notes on Tackle.*—'This fish' (a 32 lbs.) 'fought too much for my split cane rod and it has a bad kink just below the base ring.'

'Have found no line to equal "Lignum Vitae" from Manton' (Sk. P. 211). 'For traces nothing but "Killin" wire . . . For spoons I prefer the old-fashioned bar-spoon.' (SK.P. A.D.).

'Do not have a "triangle" in the belly of the spoon, which may be crushed flat by a fish, resulting in oaths and loss. A fish making an attempt at the spoon will slip on to a single tail triangle and be hooked.

Large mahseer have been caught on the following varieties of spoons :—

$1\frac{1}{2}$,	$2\frac{1}{2}$,	3,	$3\frac{1}{2}$,	4,	$4\frac{1}{2}$,	$4\frac{1}{2}$ inches copper and silver ;
$1\frac{1}{2}$,	$2\frac{1}{2}$,	3,	4,	$4\frac{1}{2}$	„	all copper ;
$1\frac{1}{2}$,	$2\frac{1}{2}$,	3,	$3\frac{1}{2}$,	4,	$4\frac{1}{2}$	„ brass (or gilt) and silver ;
$1\frac{3}{4}$,	3,	4,	$4\frac{1}{2}$	„	$4\frac{1}{2}$	„ silver.

Spoons of many different shapes, 'mistri'-mado, made by Farlow, Luscombe, Manton, Hardy, etc.

There is so far no record of any mahseer having been hooked on a 'Phantom', 'Devon' or similar toy, in local streams.

Further Notes on *Tackle*; contributed by two successful anglers.

Spoons.—(a) 'A two-inch copper and silver spoon, with a treble hook flying mount. I have also found useful a silver and brass about three inches and rather narrow—this in very strong water.'

(b) 'I prefer the "Myitkyina" shaped spoon, sold by Manton. . . . Dull outside, bright inside.'

Lead.—(a) 'I have always used a $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. lead—triangular shape.'

(b) 'I use as much as the rod will stand in most places, and let the lot sink as far as I dare. You lose a lot but it pays: about 4 oz., I think.'

Dead bait.—(a) 'Dead bait I have tried on a few occasions with success usually at a junction where one stream was dirty and the other clear. Bait just on the margin of the dirty.'

Line.—(b) 'I use waterproofed plaited cutty hunk or similar. Silk is too expensive and rots, breaking strain about 20 lbs. I rub it with Cereline (Hardy's) every day or so and dry carefully every evening. Backing, undressed cutty hunk, very strong.'

24. *Big Fish.*—Undoubtedly the keen angler who is determined to go 'one better' than his predecessors stands the greater chance of landing a record if he concentrates upon the warm waters of the Mali H'ka, or the Mali at the 'Confluence', which have surrendered more fine fish in a shorter period than those of the chilly N'Mai.

Nevertheless, the fortunate fisherman who has worked hard and been blessed with good weather conditions, may hope for a catch from the N'Mai which will rival those given up by the Mali.

For comparison, a list of large mahseer caught from both rivers is given on the next page.